

NEW CHELTENHAM SPECIAL SCHOOL

Right: Google Earth aerials
Left: Map showing the distribution of need across the county



Welcome

Why is a new special school needed?

Currently, there is not enough special school places locally to meet demand.

- 6,540 children in Gloucestershire have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- 32% of these children do not have their needs met in mainstream schools and are placed in special schools outside the county.

Demand is increasing, particularly in and around Cheltenham and Gloucester.

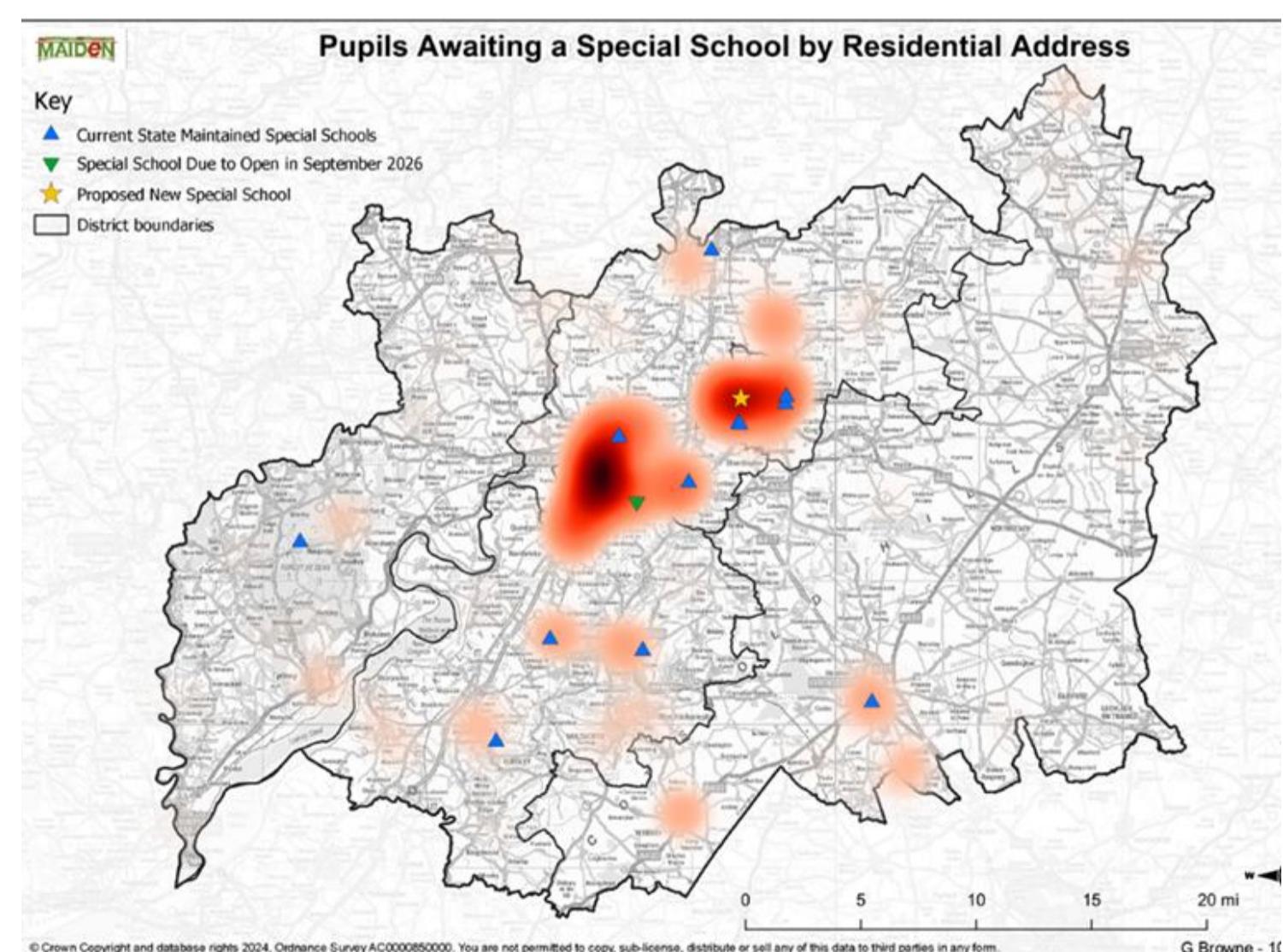
The proposal will help meet this need locally, reducing travel and pressure on families.

Will this benefit children and families who live in the area of the school?

Yes. There are children living in Arle and the surrounding areas of Cheltenham that require special school provision of this type.

The map shows:

- Existing state-funded special schools in Gloucestershire (blue triangles).
- A new Gloucester special school opening in 2027 (green triangle).
- The proposed new school in Cheltenham (yellow star).
- The map highlights a concentration of children waiting for specialist provision in this area.



How will site access and parking work?

- Most pupils will travel by council-arranged taxis and minibuses.
- Special schools generate significantly less traffic than mainstream schools.
- Around 100 onsite parking spaces will be provided.
- Main access: off Arle Road with possible secondary access for emergency or maintenance vehicles.

When will the school be delivered?

The new proposal will see the school opening in the 2027 / 2028 academic year.

What type of special school is being proposed?

- An 'all through' 200-place special school.
- Age range: 4–16 years.
- For children and young people with Complex Learning Difficulties (CLD).

Children with Complex Learning Difficulties (CLD) need extra support as they learn differently from peers. Special schools typically provide small classes with two adults, allowing flexible grouping by developmental stage rather than age.

Where is the site?

- On the former St Benedict Catholic School site, off Arle Road.
- Well located within the county with a history of educational use.
- Site size is suitable for a special school of this type.
- Adjoins the existing St George's Centre, creating opportunities for shared facilities and joint working.



These images are for illustrative purposes only.

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Right: Site photos
 Below: Site opportunities and constraints diagram
 Left: Early site adjacency diagram



Site Constraints

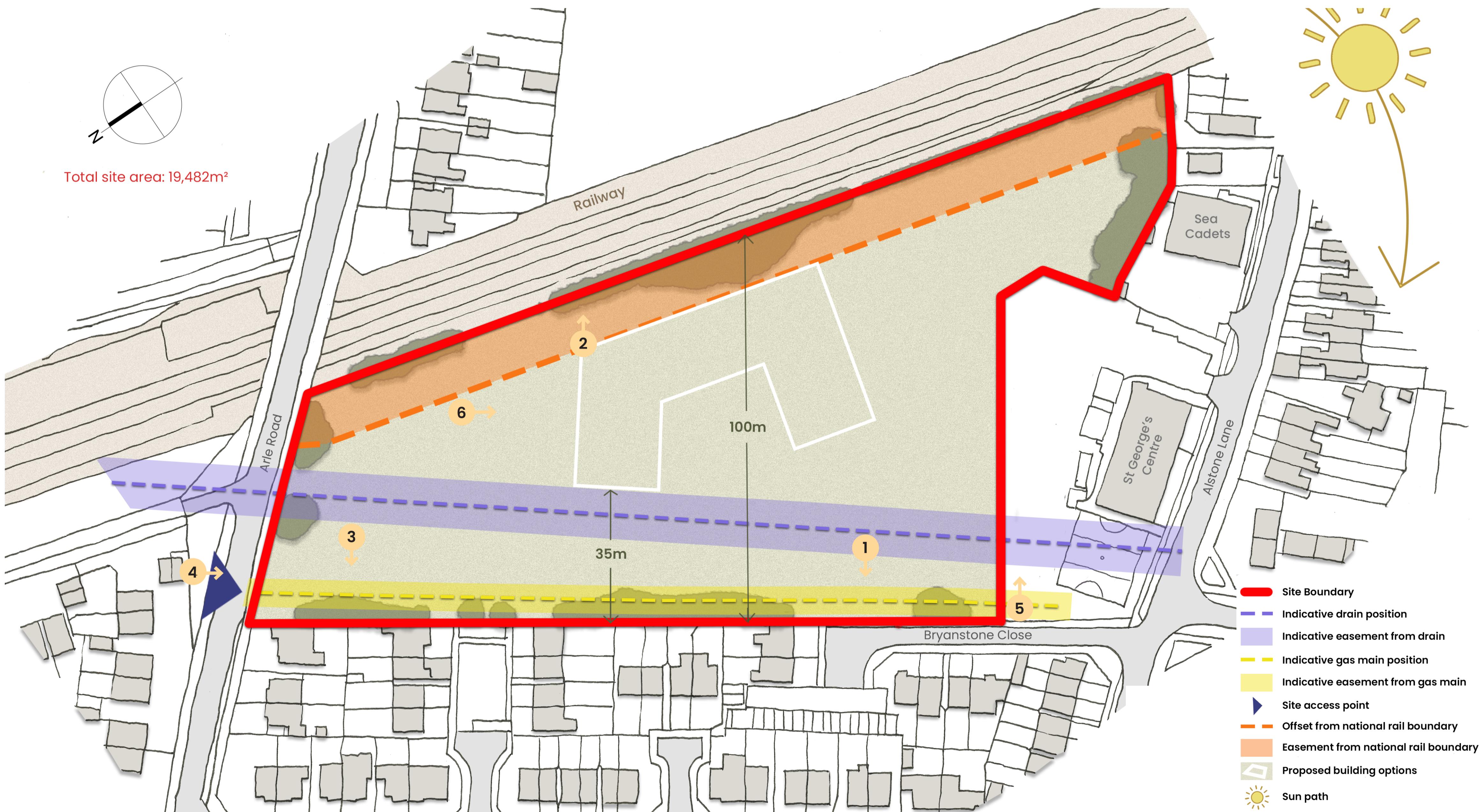
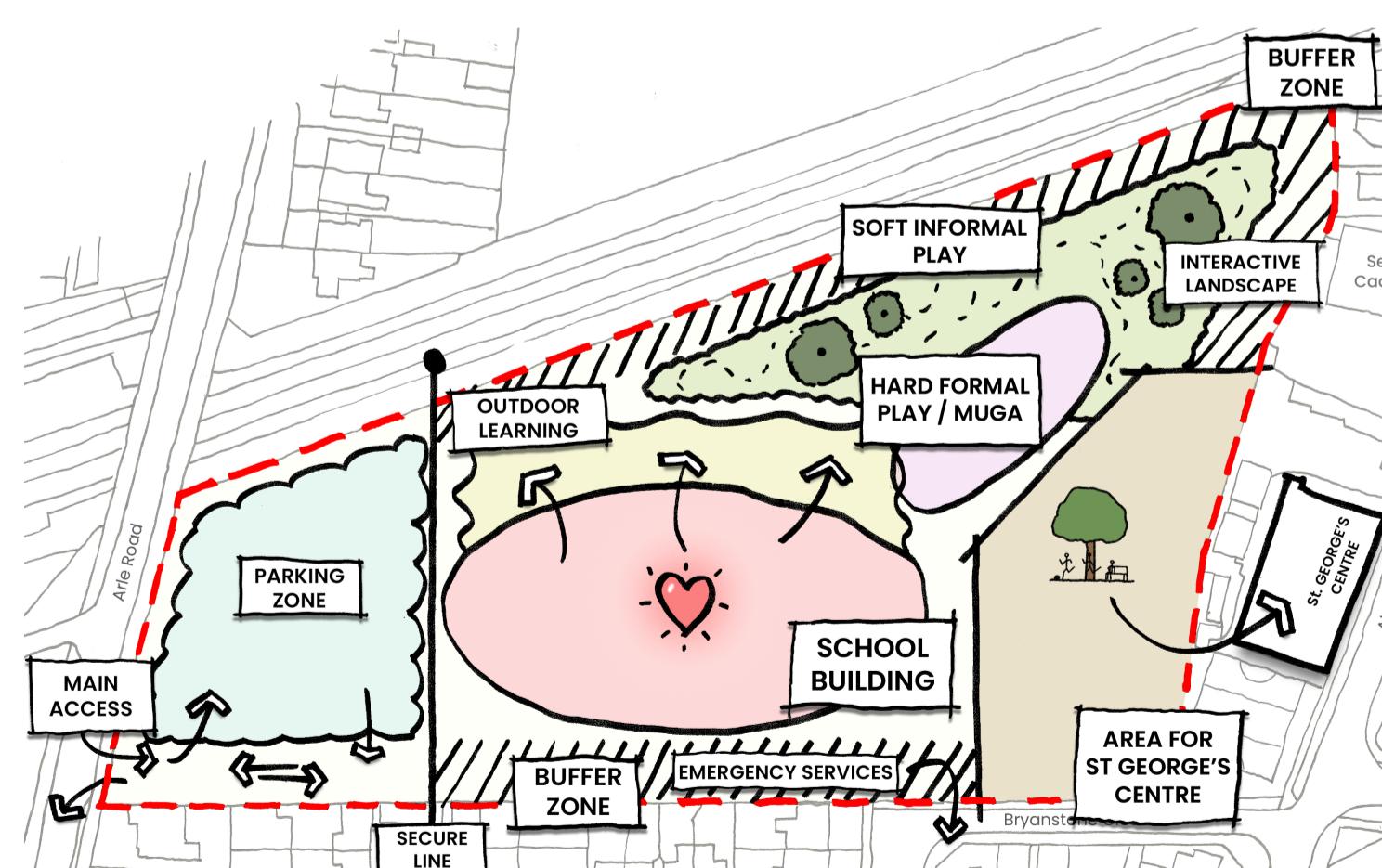
The site is situated in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire accessed from Arle Road to the north. The western boundary is bordered by residential properties, some of which have overlooking windows. The eastern boundary is shared with national rail, and the southern boundary is shared with the sea cadets and St George's Centre, an Alternate Provision School operated by GCC. The context is primarily urban yet the site itself feels open and airy due to its soft borders, especially with the railway.

Opportunities

- Good size and flat layout for a new school.
- Long history of educational use.
- Close to local communities needing specialist places.
- Potential for landscaping and biodiversity improvements.

Constraints

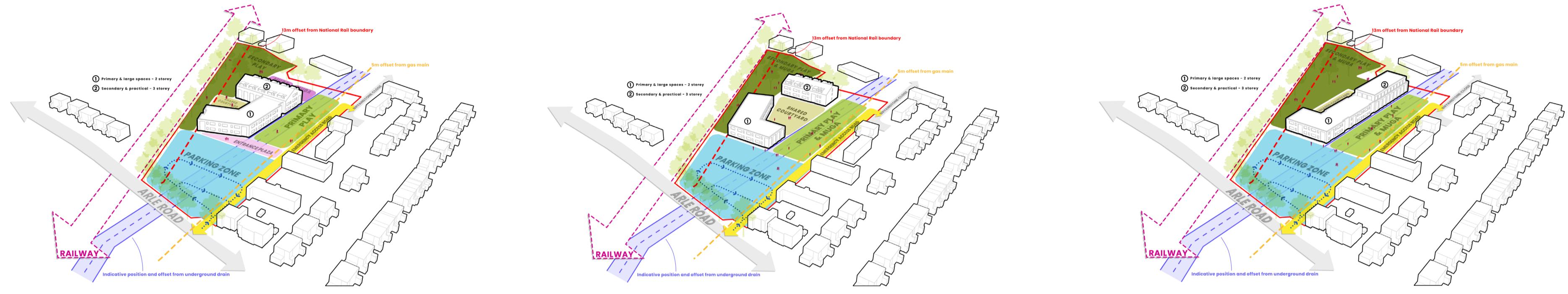
- Overlooking from nearby homes.
- Easement from railway, gas main and drains.
- Access and traffic management via Arle Road.



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Right: Presented massing options
Below: Preferred massing option



Massing

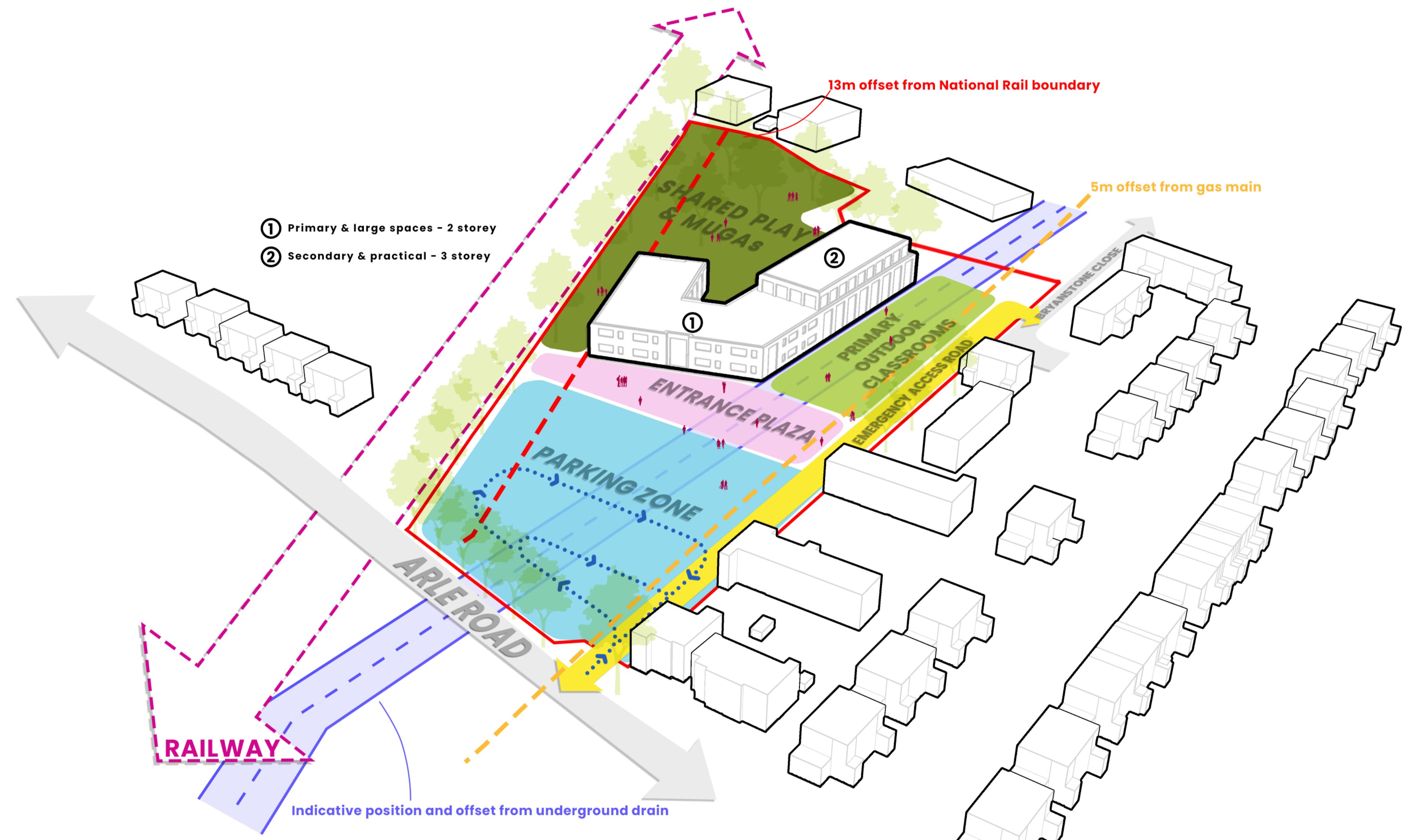
A series of layout options were developed to test how the proposed school could best fit within the site.

The site is constrained due to the easements required from national rail, the gas main and the mains sewer. A large area of parking is required, due to the nature of the school.

External spaces were reviewed to understand their relationship with the school.

The preferred massing option includes a three storey element, in order to allow the building footprint to be minimised on the site and to maximise the external space available to the school and pupils.

Careful consideration has been given by the team to the accommodation that is included within the third storey, and to how the visual impact of this piece can be minimised.



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Transport Strategy

A full Transport Assessment and School Travel Plan will accompany the planning application that will assess the potential traffic impacts, parking, and measures to encourage safe and sustainable travel.

Access

Access is proposed in the vicinity of the existing maintenance access from Arle Road via a new 6m carriageway to allow for two-way vehicle movement with a 2m footway providing pedestrian access.

A dedicated School Safety Zone is proposed to be introduced with:

- 20mph advisory speed limit
- New speed cushions
- Flashing school signs
- Coloured Road Markings
- "Keep Clear" markings



Fig. X RAPPOR dwg. no. 250619-RAP-XX-XX-TP-DR-6000, Proposed School Safety Zone - General Arrangement

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Transport Strategy

Parking Strategy

Due to operational nature of a SEND school internal drop off and pick up arrangements are key to the safe operation of arrival and departures for pupils to and from the school. Given the specialised needs of the school children attending the school, there will always be close supervision at the start and end of the school day and transport drop and picks ups will be carefully managed by the school.

Pupil arrivals and departures are predominantly by taxis, minibuses and MPVs with limited parent drop-off and all vehicles will be held within the school grounds until such a time pupils are permitted to exit or enter the vehicles and are escorted to and from the school building.

A managed internal loop road is proposed with suitable capacity for up to 80 vehicles, designed to avoid queues on surrounding roads.

It is proposed to stagger staff and pupil arrival and departure times to minimise any impacts on the local road network

Parking is proposed for 80 spaces solely to be used by teaching, administrative staff and visitors, all vehicle movements associated with this area shall not take place at the same time as pupil pick up and drop off times.

Electric vehicle, accessible and secure cycle and motorcycle parking is also proposed.



RAPPOR dwg. no. 250356-SK-02, Parking Arrangement Layout

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Landscaping

1. New SEND School Building
2. Entrance Landscape
3. Vehicle Site Access
4. Pedestrian Site Access
5. Primary School Entrance
6. Secondary School Entrance
7. Emergency / Maintenance Access
8. Service Yard
9. Secondary Emergency Access
10. Parking Area & Drop-Off Zone
11. External Classroom for Primary School
12. Hard Outdoor Social Area (Within Secured Zone)
13. Hard Outdoor PE Area
14. Learning Landscape - Ecological Enhancements
15. Soft Outdoor Area (Within Secured Zone)
16. Biodiversity and Ecological Zone (Secured)
17. Native Hedge Planting
18. Ornamental Shrub Planting
19. Native Tree / Shrub Planting
20. Attenuation Basin
21. Boundary Fence
22. Existing Railway



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Ground Floor Plan

The shape of the floor plan has been informed by the site constraints and the requirement to keep primary and secondary classrooms separate.

The ground floor has been designed to create a clear, safe, and flexible learning environment and consists of:

- Separate teaching wings for primary and secondary classrooms, linked by shared central facilities, including a single court sports hall, a multi-purpose studio, soft play, dining facilities and food technology room.
- Separate entrances are provided for secondary and primary pupils. A main entrance is provided for visitors. This has direct access to an interview room and accessible toilet to enable the secure line to be maintained.
- Reception and Year 1 classroom both have access to a covered external space.
- All classrooms have direct access to a calming room and storage; primary classrooms have toilets direct accessed from the teaching space, secondary classrooms have a toilet block.
- A U-shaped layout creates a protected courtyard with direct external access from all the ground floor classrooms.
- Group rooms along corridors provide space for small-group and flexible learning.



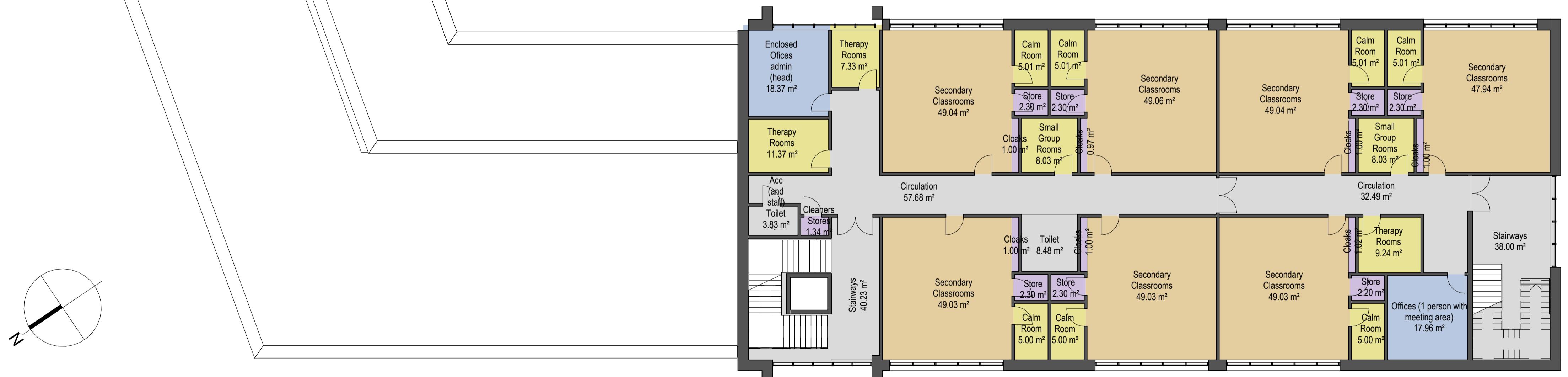
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First Floor Plan

The first floor provides a mix of classrooms, specialist spaces, and areas for additional support.

- Additional classrooms for both primary and secondary pupils in the respective wings.
- Calming spaces directly accessible from every classroom.
- Primary classrooms have toilets directly accessed from the classrooms.
- Secondary wing has a toilet block for the floor.
- Group spaces for small-group and flexible use.



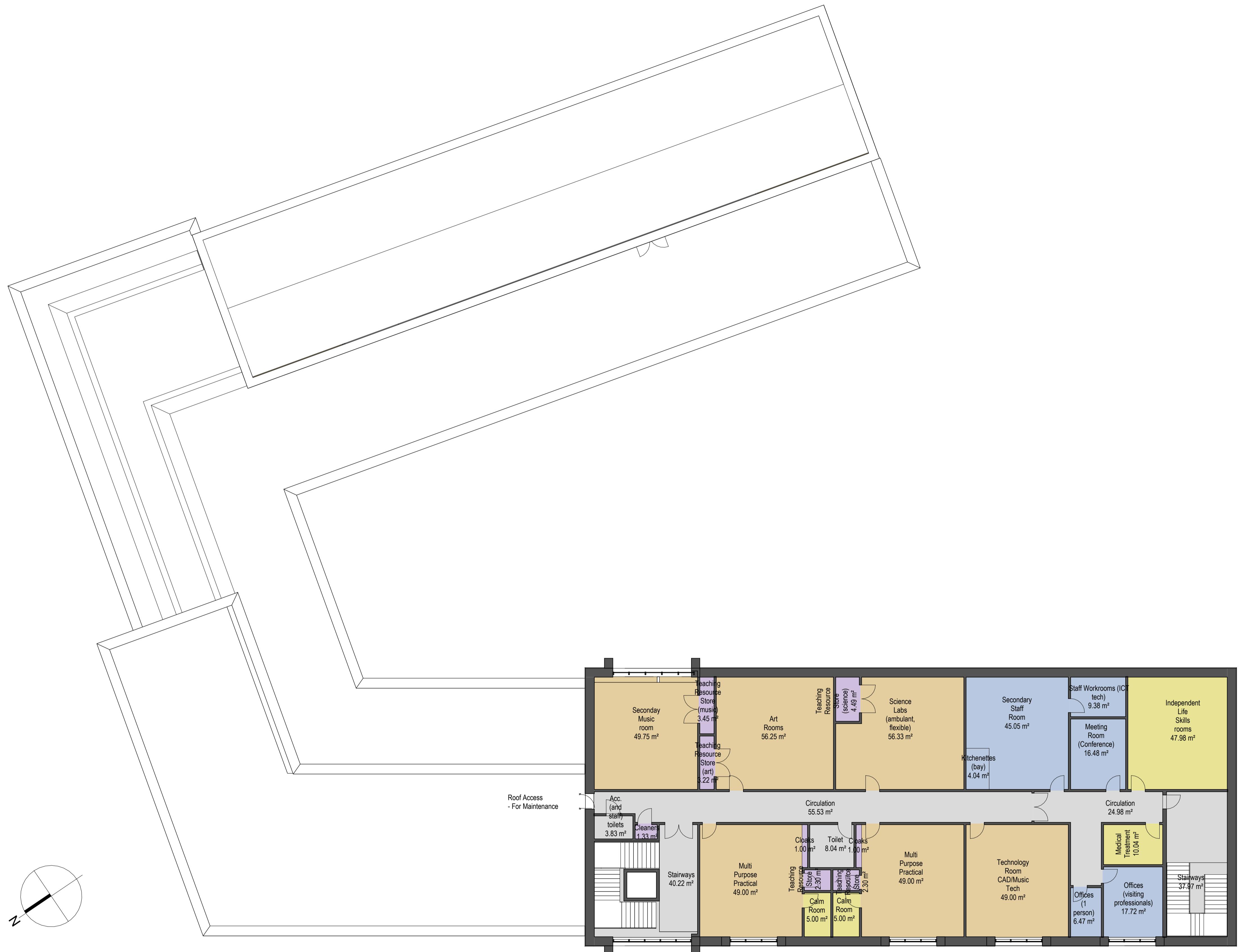
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Second Floor Plan

The second floor is located above the secondary teaching wing and focuses on practical subjects and staff facilities.

- Practical and multi-purpose spaces, including technology, science, music, and life skills.
- IT facilities for digital learning.
- Group and flexible spaces to support small-group teaching.
- Staff areas, including staff room, meeting rooms, and offices.
- Toilets provided on every floor.

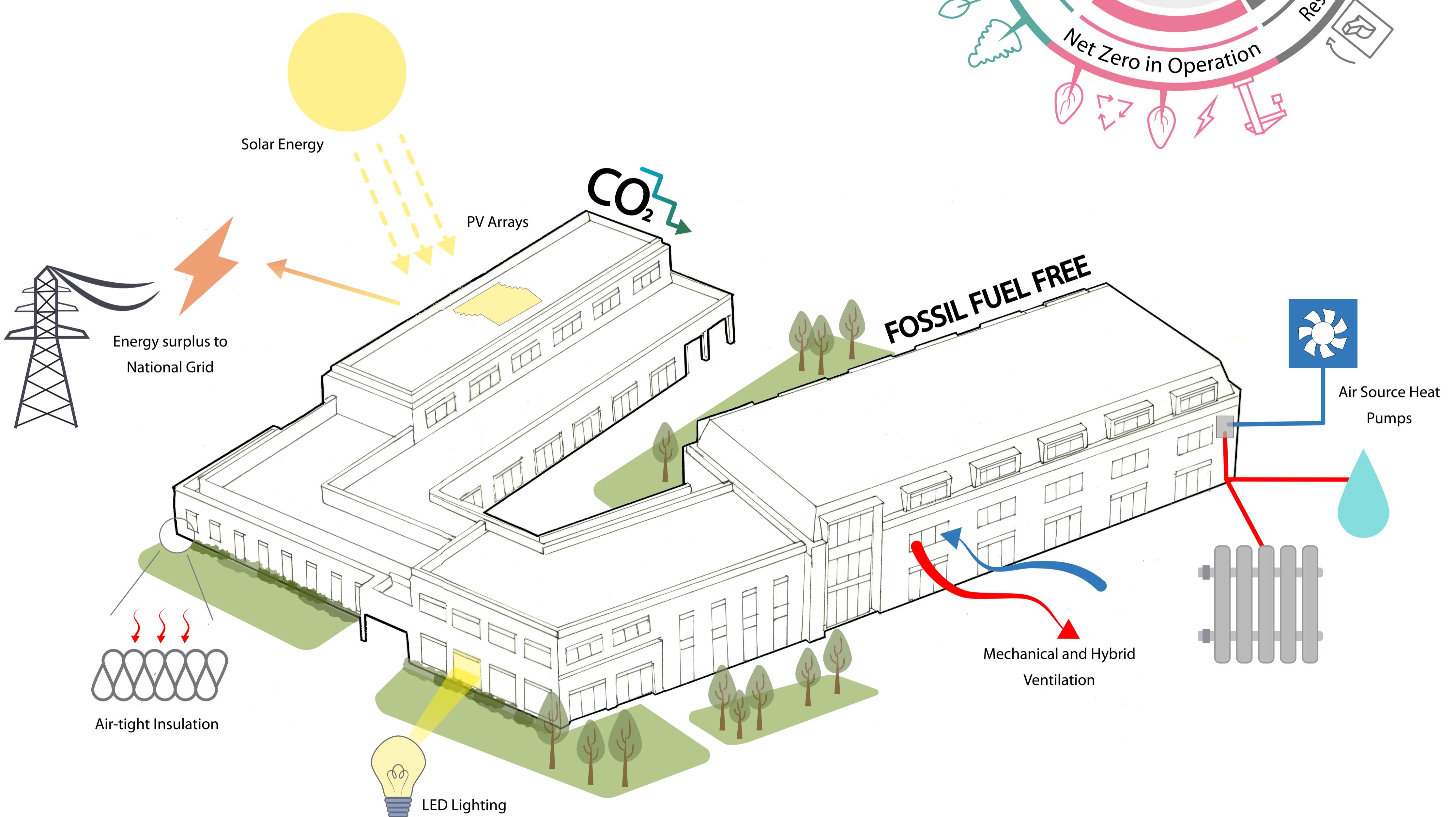


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Sustainability Strategy

- The school will be designed to minimise operational energy use and CO₂ emissions.
- Fabric-first approach: high insulation and air-tight construction to reduce heat demand, exceeding building regulations.
- Fossil-fuel free: no gas supply or boilers.
- Heating and hot water provided by air-source heat pumps.
- Mechanical and hybrid ventilation with heat recovery ensures comfort with minimal energy use.
- Daylighting maximised to reduce reliance on artificial lighting.
- LED artificial lighting with occupancy sensors and daylight dimming.
- On-site electricity generation via roof-mounted PV arrays (solar panels).
- Targeting net zero carbon operation by offsetting site energy demand with PV electricity.
- Surplus electricity exported to the national grid during low-demand periods, providing low-carbon energy locally.



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Massing

The proposal is a mixture of single storey, two storey and three storey. In order to keep the height of the building down, the majority of is proposed to be flat roof.

The three storey element is proposed to have a pitched roof, giving this piece the massing of a two storey pitched roof block and allowing the teaching space to be accommodated within the pitched roof.

The varied heights of the roofs will provide visual interest to the design.

The front of the school has been designed to be welcoming, giving a clear sense of arrival, with the main entrance clearly visible and welcoming to visitors.

A high quality, low maintenance material palette is proposed for durability and positive visual impact.



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Appearance

The rear of the school internal learning spaces and outdoor areas connect, creating a safe and flexible environment.

- Central courtyard provides a protected outdoor space for pupils.
- Distinct outdoor spaces for Primary and Secondary pupils, designed to meet the different needs of each age group.
- Windows and glazing maximise natural light and visual connections to outdoor learning spaces.
- External areas integrate play spaces, green areas, and flexible courtyards.
- Overall character is modern, cohesive design that responds to the site and surrounding context.



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